ISLAM

GOD'S MESSAGE TO HUMANITY

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INTRODUCTION

Islam is God's message to humanity. It is the most simple faith that appeals to human nature. Because, it is the message of God to his creatures whom he knows very well ...

The fair principles and ideals of Islam run in harmony with all the rules of the universe including man.

The Koran — the holy book of Islam — guides his disciples to attain the best manners for themselves and the best behaviour towards others. It says «Let there arise out of you a nation inviting to good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong».

At the same time, it respects the dual nature of the human being ; body and soul. It does not deny the needs of either of them. It keeps balance between the soul and the body.

Thus, it does not leave a man at a loss on the earth, because, if life is only matter, it will be a thick jungle of dark materialism unpierced by any ray of light from mind or soul which is the true secret of humanity and the reason of its being.

So, Islam is the religion of moderation in every aspect of life, moderation that leads to peace between the soul and the body, between man and his brother, and between man and the whole universe.

It is peace for all humanity.

However, I try in this small book to reveal from the book of Islam — the Koran — and the sayings and deeds of the prophet and from the historical facts of Islamic experience some prooves of its reality and message. But it must be understood that the lines of the glorious Koran translated into English cannot be accepted as giving the precise meanings of the Glorious Koran. It is hard and impossible to communicate the whole truth revealed in any chapter into any other language but the Arabic.

A. A.

Meadi, 30th Dec. 1983

WHY PROPHETS WERE SENT ?

One of the basic articles of Islamic catechism is the belief in all prophets of God.

A prophet receives revelation from God, and he imparts the divine message to mankind.

This means, consequently, faith in the divine revelation which must be communicated through a man , prophet.

The prophet, also, shows the people how the divine message is to be interpreted in practical life and becomes himself the model to be followed.

«It is the prophet's example that inspires a living faith in the hearts of his followers and brings about a real transformation in their lives(1)».

«Just as God has granted his gifts of physical sustenance to all men alike, so his spiritual gift of prophethood, through which spiritual life is awakened in man, is also a free gift to all the nations of the world».

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1. p. 220 from the religion of Islam by Maulana M. Ali.

Thus, prophets have appeared in all nations and Moslems are told in the Koran to say «We believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to us and in that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and in that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered» (2 : 136)(1) .

So, a Moslem should believe in all the prophets, whether their names are mentioned in the Koran or not. It is a belief that lays the foundation of a brotherhood as vast as humanity itself regarding the eternal message of God to all prophets.

The Imam Mohammad Abdouh says about the need of prophethood «Was it not only due to the wisdom of the Wise Maker who directed man the right way on bases of guidance and education and who created man and taught him articulate speech for mutual understanding and taught him how to write for corresponding, but also to

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1. The first figure stands for the number of the chapter and the second figure stands for the number of the lines.

select a certain human rank which He prepares by His grace to be His chosen servants ?» (1)

Therefore, sending prophets is necessary to Man's existence and essential to his very living. It is a guiding mentality to man.

This is because prophets educate man's conscience to distinguish good from evil and to organise his life on earth and his relations with his brothers in humanity.

The divine revelation through prophets came to aid man and to guide him in this world and the hereafter as mentioned in the Koran «There will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows my guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve» (2 : 38).

The Koran declares that the object of sending prophets was no other than the uplift of man, to enable him to subjugate his animal passions, to inspire him with nobler and higher sentiments and to imbue him with Divine morals.

Prophets were sent to every nation but their message was limited to that particular nation. Moses and

1. p. 147 from : Islam and Humanity's need of it by M.Y. Mousaa.

Jesus for example were sent to the children of Israel. Prophets, also were sent when nations and peoples were in need of them.

But an era came when all the known world was suffering from complete chaos and base moralities.

A modern writer ; J. H. Denison says (1) :

«In the fifth and sixth centuries, the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos. The old emotional cultures that had made civilization possible, since they had given to men a sense of unity and of reverence for their rulers, had broken down, and nothing had been found adequate to take their place...

«It seemed then that the great civilization which it had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism where every tribe and sect was against the next and law and order were unknown. The old tribal sanctions had lost their power ...

«The new sanctions created by Christianity were

1. pp. 265-269, from his book «Emotions as the Basis of Civilization.»

working division and destruction istead of unity and order ... Civilization like a gigantic tree whose foliage had over-reached the world ... stood tottering ... rotten to the core ... Was there any emotional culture that could be brought in to gather mankind once more into unity and to save civilization ?

«It was among those people — of Arabia — that the man was born who was to unite the whole known world of the east and south».

Yes ; Mohammad, peace be upon him, was sent at that time with Islam — his message — to rescue a world lost in bewilderment and chaos.

His message has been the completion for all the previous messages ; a comprehensive message for all humanity and for ever.

Islam laid the basis of the unification of humanity of which no other reformer or religion has ever dreamed ; of brotherhood of man which known no bounds of colour, race, country, language or even of rank ... of a unity of the human race beyond which human conception cannot go. It not only recognizes the equality of the civil and political rights of men, but also that of their spiritual rights.

Thus, the Koran orders Mohammad to « Say. O people ! I am the Apostle of Allah to you all, of Him Whose is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth». (7 : 158)

«One thing is sure that no other prophet is spoken of either in the Koran or in any other scripture as having been sent to the whole of humanity or to all peoples or all nations(1)». And he is not only a warner to all nations but a mercy to all of them as well : «And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to all the nations». (21 : 107)

Mohammad, peace be upon him, therefore does not only claim to have been sent to the whole world, to be a warner to all people and a mercy to all nations, but also to lay the foundations of a world-religion by making the beief in the prophet of every nation the basic principle on which the whole of humanity can agree, the only basis of equal treatment for all nations. Mohammad has established in fact a world-religion wherein the idea of nationality is superseded by the consciousness of the unity of the human race.

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1. p. 224 from «the Religion of Islam» by Maulana M. Ali.

We saw it, once in history, when all geographical limitations were swept away as were all bars of colour and race, and the basis of human race was laid upon the grand principle that the whole human race was one and that all men, wherever they might be found, were a single nation.

Mohammad has been able, also to communicate the Divine will and to point out the ways and exercising manners by which men could hold communion with God.

His message is so perfect that it has met the requirements not only of all contemporary nations but of all future generations as well.

It is stated in the Koran «This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed on you My blessing». (5 : 3)

THE AIM OF LIFE

Death, in the light of the plain teachings of the Koran, is not the end of man's life ; it only opens the door to another, a higher, form of life.

Islam accords to the faith in that future life an importance which is next only to faith in God.

God is the Master of the day of requital; the day of resurrection when every deed shall find its full reward. Thus, the greater the faith in good or bad consequences of a deed, the greater is the incentive which urges man to or withholds him from that deed.

This belief is both the greatest impetus towards the good and the noble and the greatest restraint upon evil or irresponsible deeds. It is a protection for human relations on earth.

Yet, man has his own free will of action which he exercises within the frame-work of causes and circumstances.

The Islamic code of life takes human instinct into consideration. There is nothing in Islam such as torturing one's soul by denying the satisfaction of natural needs of the body in an attempt to refine and strengthen the spirit.

To enjoy oneself within the limits of Islamic laws is an act of piety and a sign of faith in God.

It is said that «Three persons came to the prophet's house asking about the prophet's acts of worship. When they found out they said : where do we stand in relation to the prophet ? God has forgiven him all his sins». Then, one of them said «I shall spend my nights in prayers». The second said «I shall fast the whole year». The third said, «I shall never marry». When the prophet was told about them, he said : «By God, none of you could be more fearful of Allah than myself. Yet I fast and break the fast, I pray a part of the night and sleep the rest and I marry. Whoever rejects my way of life, does not belong to me».

Islam recognises an equilibrium between body and soul under the control of free will. There is no compulsion.

God says «There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. And he who rejecteth false deities and believeth in Allah has grasped a firm handhold which will never break. Allah is Hearer, knower». (2 : 256)

Islam aims, not only, at the liberation of the mind from deception and false traditions but also, the libera-

tion of the weak from the power and might of the strong, and at the liberation of intellect, the will and work, as long as they do not do harm to others or to the public interest.

Islam does not recognise men of religion as mediators between God and His creatures. It enables every person to be in communion with his Creator, to confer in private with Him and to implore forgiveness for his sin from Him, for He is the only one Who hears the secret and the private discourse and Who answers the oppressed when they cry unto Him and takes their ills and forgives whom He will.

Under these Islamic instructions, man can enjoy peace of mind and quietude of conscience. Rightousness will accompany his deeds. He will be independent in his actions, however debased the society may be.

Man has thus gained dignity, complete freedom of thought and action, and thus becomes entirely responsible for what he does.

Maulana Mohammad Ali — in his book «The religion of Islam» adds(1); «That the whole creation on this earth is for the service of man, and that human life has

1. pp. 277, 78, 79.

some great aim and purpose to fulfil, is yet another argument for Resurrection advanced by the Holy Koran : «Does man think that he is to be left to wander without an aim ? (75 : 36) ; «What ! do you think that we have created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to us ?» (23 : 115). Just as the God-idea ennobles man's life, and endows it with the purest and highest impulses, so does the resurrection-idea introduce a seriousness into man's life which cannot be otherwise attained. It will be taking too low a view of human nature to imagine that with all those vast capacities for ruling nature and its wonderful forces, human life itself has no aim, and is like the grass that grows up today and disappears tomorrow, serving either as fodder or manure.

The Holy Koran makes this argument clear in three brief sentences : «Surely We have created man in the best make, then We render him the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good, for they shall have a reward never to be cut off» (95 : 4-6). The last words clearly rerer to the higher life which is never to be cut off, and this argument is followed by the conclusion : «So who can give thee the lie after this about Judgement?» (95:7). It cannot be that the whole of creation should serve a purpose and that man alone, who is lord of it and endowed with capabilities for ruling the universe, should

have a purposeless existence. It is the Resurrection alone that solves this difficulty. Man has a higher object to fulfil, he has a higher life to live beyond this world ; **and that higher life is the aim of human life.**

Another argument adduced by the Holy Koran in support of the Resurrection is that good and evil must have their reward. Of the whole living creation, man alone has the power to discriminate between good and evil. And so acute is his perception of good and evil that he will strive with all his might to promote good and to eradicate evil. He makes laws for this purpose, and uses the whole machinery of power at his disposal to enforce them. Yet what do we see in practical life ? Good is often neglected and starves while evil prospers. That is not as it should be. «I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other» (3 : 194) ; «Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it» (99 : 7,8) ... such are some of the plain declarations made by the Holy Koran. And when we look at nature around us, we find the same law at work. Every cause has its effects, and every thing done must bear a fruit. Why should man's good or evil deeds be an exception to this general rule of the whole universe ? And if

they are not an exception, as they should not be, the conclusion is evident that good and evil must bear their full fruit in another life, which indicates the continuity of the life of man in another world, when death has put an end to it in this.

Resurection is not a mere dogma to believe. It is a principle of human life which makes that life more serious and more useful, while at the same time awakening in man the consciousness of a life that is higher. The man who sincerely believes in the Resurrection, will try his utmost to take advantage of every opportunity that is offered to him to live his life to the best purpose, he will do his best to do any good that he possibly can to the creatures of God, and he will shun every evil deed so far as lies in his power. Thus a belief in the Resurrection is needed in the first place to make this lower life worth living».

If a man does not believe in the Resurrection when complete justice will be accomplished and the aim of a better life to come; he will live at a loss and will believe that living is in vain.

That is clear in wars that are waged coveting the wealth of other nations, of other human brothers, in the high rate of suicide among those who enjoy the highest standard of living — like Sweden —, etc... etc...

THE GLORIOUS KORAN

The glorious Koran is the main source of principles and ordinances of Islam. At the same time ; it contains the real teachings of all the holy scriptures.

If previous apostles had been provided with miracles to support them, such as the change of the stick into a serpent in the case of Moses and healing the blind and the deaf and restoring the dead in the case of Jesus; Mohammad was provided with the Koran.

It is a true miracle revealed, to an illiterate, in Arabic and is entirely void of falsehood. It was a linguistic miracle in Arabic language and a permanent challenge in its composition. All the Arabs, eloquent and rhetorical as they were, at the time of revelation, were unable to compose a chapter similar to the chapters of he Koran. God says «Say Verily, though mankind and the Jinn should assemble to produce the like of this Koran, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another». (17 : 88) «Or do they say, He has forged it ? Say, then bring a chapter like this and invite whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful» (10 : 38).

The challenge is still existing.

The Koran is indeed the greatest miracle ever vouchsafed to a prophet because it stands in need of no other evidence whatever, but 'is itself a living proof of its own truth for all time. It is the only eternal miracle of any prophet.

Let us recite these quotations from modern writers about the Koran :

«It was the one miracle claimed by Mohammed» his standing miracle' he called it ; and a miracle indeed it is.» (Bosworth Smith's Life of Mohammed, p. 290).

«The Quran is unapproachable as regards convincing power, eloquence and even composition» (New Researches by Hirschfeld, p. 8).

«That the best of Arab writers has never succeeded in producing anything equal in merit to the Quran itself is not surprsing» (Palmer Intr. to Translation of Quran, PIV).

«In short, the Quran is a miracle because it brought about the greatest transformation that the world has ever witnessed ... a transformation of the individual, of

the family, of society, of the nation, of country; an awakening material as well as moral, intellectual as well as spiritual. It produced an effect, a hundred thousand times greater than that of any other miracle recorded of any prophet ; hence its claim to be the greatest of all miracles is incontestable and uncontested. (Maulana Muhammad Ali, the Religion of Islam, p. 246).

The style of the Koran is inimitable. It is different from all the styles of all the Arabs. Eloquence, superb versification and a unique style are united in the Koran.

Thus, on hearing a little of the Koran one is sure that he listens to a speech unlike that of humans and if he gives up obstinacy, he will believe in it and profess it to be the revelation of God.

Utbah — one of the notables of Qoreish — went to Mohammad asking him — on behalf of his tribe — to give up preaching his creed. After, he had finished his speech, Mohammad recited to him some lines of the Koran. Then, Otbah returned to his people who asked him «What news have you got ?» He replied «I swear by God, I listened to a speech that I had never heard anything like before ! By God, it is not poetry; it is not witchery ; it is not divination... etc».

Besides, the Koran has remained immune from any alteration not even the change of one single letter of it. That was the promise of God saying in the Koran itself «So ! We, even We, reveal the Reminder (the Koran) and Lo ! We verily are its Guardian». (15 : 9)

But, how this has been achieved throughout 14 centuries ?

«Though the Holy Quran was revealed in portions, yet it is a mistake to suppose that it remained long in that fragmentary condition. As its very name implies, it was a book from the beginning, and though it could not be complete until the last verse was revealed, it was never without some form of arrangement. There is the clearest testimony, internal as well as external, that every single vese or part of verse and every chapter that was revealed had its own definite place in the Holy Book (1)».

It was customary with the prophet that when portions of different chapters were revealed to him, he called one of those persons who used to write the

1. pp. 26, 27 from the Religion of Islam by Maulana Mohamed Ali.

Koran and said to him «Write this verse in the chapter were such and such verses occur». Thus the whole Koran was arranged by the prophet himself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Omar urged Abu Bakr — the first caliph after the prophet — to compile a standard written copy, in order to keep any portion of the Koran from loss in case all reciters or scribes of the Koran should die. This copy was complied from the manuscripts written under the direction of the prophet himself and was entrusted to the care of Hafsa, the wife of the prophet. Osman — the third calif — ordered several copies to be made after that copy compiled by Abu Bacr. These copies were sent to different islamic centres to be the only reference of the Koran.

Furthermore, it is a fact that every line of the Koran when revealed unto Mohammad, was at once announced and made public. And at once, It is a part of the public prayer and has been repeated day and night to be in the hearing of a great audience.

There was, also the unanimous testimony of all the companions of the prophet — Sahib — that every word or line that found a place in the collection of Hafsa was part of the Divine revelation.

After being transcribed by hand the time came when the Koran was to be printed so as to be kept from loss.

Now, we have disks, recorders and magnatic tapes for radio and television.

Every day brings new methods to keep the Koran unmolested and to achieve God's promise to preserve it.

Then, if we want to consider the position of the Koran in the Arabic language, we can easily conceive its eminent unsurpassed place in Arabic literature.

«For what book is there in the whole history of the human race that has not only through thirteen(1) long centuries remained admittedly the stadard of the language in which it is written, but also originated a world — wide literature ?

«The best books only half as old as the Holy Quran are no longer the standard for the language of today of the language in which, respectively, they were

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1. Now they are more than fourteen centuries.

written. The feat accomplished by the Holy Quran is simply unapproached in the whole history of the written word. It transformed a dialect spoken in a very limited area of a forgotten corner of the world into a world-wide language which became the mother-tongue of vast countries and mighty empires, and produced a literature which is the basis of the culture of powerful nations from one end of the world to the other end(2)».

Dr. Steingass says :

«But we may well ask ourselves, what would in all probability have become of this language without Muhammad and his Quran ? This is not at all an idle and desultory speculation. It is true the Arabic language had already produced numerous fine specimens of genuine and high-flown poetry, but such poetry was chiefly if not exclusively, preserved in the memory of the people. Moreover poetry is not tantamount to literature.

Divided among themselves into numerous tribes, who were engaged in perpetual warfare against each other, the Arabs, and with them their various dialects,

2. p. 50 from «The Religion of Islam» by Maulana Mohammad Ali.

would more and more have drifted asunder, poetry would have followed in the wake, and the population of Arabia would have broken up into a multitude of clans, with their particular bards, whose love and war-songs enterprising travellers of our day might now collect.

It seems, then, that it is only a work of the nature of the Quran which could develop ancient Arabic into a literary language ...

But not only by raising a dialect, through its generalisation, to the power of a language, and by rendering the adoption of writing indispensable, has the Quran initiated the development of an Arabic literature; its composition itself has contributed two factors absolutely needful to this development : it has added to the existing poetry the origins of rhetoric and prose .

But Muhammad made a still greater and more decisive step towards creating a literature of his people. In those suras, in which he regulated the private and public life of the Muslims, he originated a prose, which has remained a standard of classical purity ever since».

(Hughes 'Dictionary of Islam. art. Quran, pp. 528, 529).

The position of the Koran, is recognised even by the most biassed of writers ... We can quote here few examples :

«The style of the Koran is, generally beautiful and fluent ... and in many places, especially where the majesty and attributes of God are described, sublime and magnificent ... He succeeded so well, and so strangely captivated the minds of his audience, that several of his opponents thought it the effect of witchcraft and enchantment». (G. Sale, Al-Koran, Preliminary Discourse, p. 48).

«That the best of Arab writers has never succeeded in producing anything equal in merit to the Quran itself is not surprising». (E. H. Palmer, The Quran, Intro. P. lv).

«The earliest Mekka revelations are those which contain what is highest in a great religion and what was purest in a great man» (E. W. Lane, Selections from the Holy Quran, Intro. p. cvi).

«However often we turn to it, at first disgusting us each time afresh, it soon attracts, astounds, and in the end enforces our reverence ... Its style, in accor-

dance with its contents and aim, is stern, grand, terrible-ever and anon truly sublime ... Thus this book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence» (Goethe — Hughes' Dictionary of Islam p. 526.)

«We may well say the Quran is one of the grandest books ever written ... Sublime and chaste, where the supereme truth of God's unity is to be proclaimed; appealing in high- pitched strains to the imagination of a poetically-gifted people where the eternal consequences of man's submssion to God's holy will, or of rebellion against it, are pictured ; touching in its simple, almost crude, earnestness, when it seeks again and again encouragement or consolation for God's messenger, and a solemn warning for those to whome he has been sent, in the histories of the prophets of old : the language of the Quran adapts itself of the exigencies of everyday life, when this everyday life, in its private and public bearings, is to be brought in harmony with the fundamental principles of the new dispensation.»

«Here therefore its merits as a literary production should, perhaps not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad's contem-

poraries and fellow-countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well-organized body, animated by ideas far beyond those which until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilized nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history» (Steingass — Hughes' Dictionary of Islam, pp. 527, 528).

There are other considerations which entitle the Koran to a place of eminence as no other book can aspire. It sheds a flood of light on all the fundamentals of religion, the existence and unity of God, the reward of good and evil, the life after death, paradise and Hell, etc. It, also, offers a solution to the most difficult problems of this life, such as the distribution of wealth, family rules and all other question on which depends in any degree the happiness and advancement of man.

We sail try to explain in detail some of these subjects in the following chapters to shed more light on the great miracle of Mohammad ; the Koran.

A CALL FOR LEARNING

Islam is a keen call for life. But, one cannot enjoy a balanced life without knowledge. Thus, the first lines from the Koran revealed unto Mohammad were :

Read : In the name of thy Lord who creates, Creates man from a clot.

Read : And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who teaches by the pen,

Teaches man that which he knew not. (96 : 1-5)

Islam urges his followers — through its book — to contemplate the universe with its phenomena and manifestations and to use their faculties of discernement and intellect in contemplating all that which surrounds man and all the world's creatures and objects created by God. It does this with the aim of directing us towards the quest of knowledge, using every means and following every way, so that we can understand the universe with all its laws and order to our best advantage. In this way, we can become real believers and can lead a happy and prosperous life.

God says :

«Lo ! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of night and day, and the ships which run upon the sea with that which is of use to men, and the waters which Allah sends down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein, and (in) the ordinance of the winds, and the clouds obedient between heaven and earth : are signs (of Allah's sovereignty) for people who have sense». (2 : 164)

«Have they not pondered upon themselves ? Allah created not the heavens and the earth, and that which is between them, save with truth and for destined end» (30 : 8)

«See ye not how Allah hath created seven heavens in harmony.

And has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lamp ?

And Allah has caused you to grow as a growth from the earth», (71 : 15, 16, 17)

«Will they not regard the camels, how they are created ?

And the heaven, how it is raised ?

And the hills, how they are set up ?

And the earth, how it is spread ?

(88 : 17, 18, 19, 20)

Is it not a continuous summon for learning ?

The illiterate prophet, also, emphasizes this call.
He says :

«The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Moslem»,

«The ink of the scholar is as holy as the blood of the martyr on doom's day» and

«Ask for knowledge even in China» ; Meaning, go to the most distant place in the world if there is a useful knowledge.

These are few examples of many sayings of the prophet urging the people to learn.

Because the right education leads to the building up of a healthy social order.

Such healthy society consists of well educated individuals.

Islam tries, through its precepts, to preach gradually a true faith. It directs one to look for evidence of the existence of God through his senses, mind and thought and to approach an understanding of both animate and the inanimate worlds.

The Koran lays special stress on the fact that notwithstanding its immensity of variety, there is but one law for the whole universe :

«Who created the seven heavens alike, thou seest no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again and again ; thy look shall come back to thee confused while it is fatigued» (67:3, 4)

Maulana M. Ali adds «Here we are told that there is in creation neither incongruity whereby things belonging to the same class are subject to different laws ; nor disorder whereby the law cannot work uniformly; so that the miraculous regularity and uniformity of law in the midst of the unimagniable variety of conflicting conditions existing in the universe is also evidence of a divine purpose and wisdom of the creation of things.

«Another argument that there is an intelligent Being guiding the universe is the fact that from the smallest particle to the largest heavenly body, everything is held under control and is subject to law ; no one thing interfers with the course of another or hampers it ; while on the other hand, all things are helping each other on to attain perfection.

The Holy Quran stresses this fact frequently :

«The sun and the moon follow a reckoning and the herbs and the trees do adore». (55 : 5, 6)

«And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Wise. And for the moon We have ordained stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day ; and all bodies float on in a sphere» (36 : 38-40).

«And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself ; indeed there are signs in this for a people who reflect». (45 : 13)

«All these verses, and others, show that inasmuch as everything is subject to command and control for fulfilment of creation purpose, there must be an all-Wise Controller of the whole» (1).

In obedience to his faith and this direction to reflect and think, a Moslem must ponder over the wonders of the creation of the universe and the laws that direct and render exact its motion and to contemplate the wonderful pattern behind both the life of animals and plants with their various species. He must exploit everything created for him in earth and heaven.

The result of this zealous call for learning was a trasformation unparalleled in the history of the world. An entire change happened in the lives of a whole nation in an incredibly short time, that is to say, a period of no more than twenty-three years.

Islam found the Arabs worshippers of idols, trees and heaps of sand, yet in less than quarter of a century the worship of one God ruled the whole land and idolatry had been wiped out from Arabia. It swept the superstitions before it and, in their place, gave the most ra-

1. pp. 137, 138 from «the Religion of Islam».

tional religion the world could dream of. The Arab who had been wont to pride himself on his ignorance had, as if by a magician's wand, been transformed into the lover of knowledge, drinking deep at every fountain of learning to which he could gain access. A new civilisation dawned on the world.

Thus, we can say that Islam has carried out its mission as best as it could in connection with reason and learning and that Moslem knowledge was foremost among the strongest causes of Europe's Renaissance in the Middle Ages.

THE UNSEEN WORLD

God says in the Koran :

«Nay, I swear by the places of the stars.

And lo ! that verily is a tremendous oath, if ye but knew». (56 : 75, 76)

Fourteen hundred years ago, no one could conceive, how far the stars are from the earth. No one could count at that time the miles dividing the nearest star from the earth.

«Modern sciences are continually probing into the secrets and nature of the universe in order to reveal the hidden mysteries and the reason behind them. Allah is the creator of nature and He is the Revealer of the Quran, many of whose verses include indications to the mysteries imbued in His creation. Many verses, also, contain repeated calls to mankind urging his servants to examine carefully the universe and its marvels, and guiding them, sometimes by express indications and sometimes by implication to contemplate those wonderful aspects in nature and the laws governing them. Such swearing by the locations of the stars must have a special significance and a great secret justify its being the subject of His oath and should call our attention to the law of general gravitation and its two important

partners, namely the multiplication of the masses of the two attracting bodies and the inverse proportionality with the square of the distance between them.

According to this law, the heavens and earth are set up, and the whole Universe and all the motions in it are organised. Think how it is that each of the heavenly bodies moves in an orbit of its own without transgressing on any other or being transgressed on by any wandering body. All this is predesigned by God according to that general law of gravitation, which compels the smaller of bodies to revolve about the bigger ones, so that the orbiters are numerous, while the central body is a single entity.

To scientists and men of learning was delegated the task of revealing these mysteries and demonstrating their veracity to prove that the Quran had descended from Allah.

As knowledge and scientific discoveries advance, the more easily detectable to wise contemplators would be the conformity between the tokens in the Quranic verses and the wonders contained in nature. They would soon realise that the words of nature — which are facts and laws — coincide with the words of the Quran which are message and tokens clear in some cases and implied in others, according to Almighty

God's wisdom and manners in which He addresses His creations.

«Thus, with the passage of time, new phases of the defiance (or unattainable marvels) of the Quran will unfold, as people get to learn more facts which their predecessors did not know. That will be a sort of renewing the Islamic vocation, as though the prophet were present among the people of every age calling them to the religion of Allah, and showing them proof of its truthfulness in the form of new tokens manifesting the conformity between nature and the Quran(1)».

No doubt, if one finds in the Koran revealed 14 centuries ago, some of the scientific facts known to us in the last two centuries, he will be sure that this Koran is the words of God the Creator of these facts.

But we must bear in mind that these scientific facts stated in the Koran are put in a form that does neither clash with what the people believe, nor disagree with the true scientific facts included.

We, also, cannot discuss all these scientific facts in such a small book. It needs the work of a team of learned men and a voluminous space to deal with them.

1. pp. 13, 14 from «Glimpses of the Scientific Marvels of the Quran» by Dr. M. A. El-Ghamrawy.

Thus we shall mention a few examples :

1. «And (remember) when ye slew a man and disagreed concerning it and Allah brought forth that which ye were hiding. And We said : Smite him some of it (the corpse). Thus, Allah bringeth the dead to life and showeth you His portents so that ye may understand.» (2 : 72, 73)

Scholars of psychology say that the criminal usually wanders around the place of his crime and if you show him the murdered body, it will be easier to have his confession of the murder. Thus, he will be punished and the family of the deceased will be rewarded.

That is how «Allah bringeth the dead to life» by stopping aggression.

2. «And We send the winds fertilising, and cause water to descend from the sky, and give it to you to drink. It is not ye who are the holders of the store thereof». (15 : 22)

The fact that the wind is a means of pollination conveying pollen grains from the another of one plant to the stigma of another, was unknown 14 centuries ago, is indisputable.

But these lines of the Koran reveals, also, the contribution of the wind to setting the appropriate condition for the unification between different kinds of elec-

tricity among clouds. That is the role of winds in making rains fall. Rains will complete the second stage of fostering the growth of the plant.

3. «Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were of one piece, then we parted them, and We made every living thing of water ? Will they not then believe ?» (21 : 30)

This one of the greatest unttainable scientific marvels of the Koran, which agrees with modern science in stipulating that the whole universe was one diffused entity before therein existed ; an earth, a star or a nebula.

«Moreover, it was proved in modern astronomy that the earth was separated from the sun, relying especially on what was proved in chemistry that the elements, common between the earth and the sun, are more than sixty, and that the intense degree of temperature of the inside of the sun is sufficient to disintegrate what is beyond those sixty and odd earthly elements, which the spectroscopic analysis had not discerned in the sun (1)».

One of the most important elements sent down

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1. p. 30 from «Glimpses of the Scientific Marvels of the Quran» by M. A. El Ghamrawy.

from the sun, is iron which benefits man in his blood and in his inventions. This is mentioned explicitly in the Koran :

«And we sent down iron, wherein is mighty power and many uses for mankind». (57 : 25)

This is another proof that «the earth and sun were of one piece».

4. «The Day when We shall roll up the heavens as a recorder rolleth up a written scroll, as We began the first creation, We shall repeat it. (It is) a promise (binding) upon Us. Lo ! We are to perform it.» (21:104)

Very recently, astronomers have been able to give the interpretation of of these lines. They say that every star must reach the stage of puberty. When the sun reaches this stage it will become bigger, its sphere of gravity will enlarge and will attract all the solar group to their mother, the sun, to form one entity as before. That may be the day of Resurrection. But certainly, it will be the end of life on our earth.

5. «Verily we created man from a product of wet earth; Then placed him as a drop (of seed) in a safe lodging; Then fashioned We the drop a clot, then fa-

shioned We the clot a little lump, then fashioned We the little lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators ! (23 : 12-14)

When did scientists discover the evolution of the embryo and its stages during the period of pregnancy ? Here, in the Koran, it was described clearly and simply fourteen centuries ago.

6. «He winds the night over the day and He winds the day over the night» (39 : 5)

" i.e. They both overlap and succeed each other in an enduring pattern. Beside the rotation of the earth indicated several times in the Quran ; if we ponder upon the process of rolling the night over the day, we shall readily ascribe it to the axial rolling of the earth (on which night prevails) and realize that the rolling of the day over the night is caused by the actual rolling of the sun's light over the dark air enveloped round the earth. The repetition denotes a scientific miracle, because it shows clearly that the earth is spherical as an implication of the spherical shape of its atmosphere

which is occupied alternately by day and night everywhere (1)».

7. «Does man think we cannot assemble his bones ? Nay, We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers». (7 5: 3, 4)

Here the Koran speaks about the finger tips whose print is never repeated throughout all human creation. Another scientific fact which was discovered hunderds of years after the Koran's revelation.

Surely, every generation will find something new in the Koran until the end of the world.

But, we would like to mention another miraculous aspect of the Koran beside its scientific marvels. It is prophecy :

1. «The power of Abu Lahab will perish, and he will perish. His wealth and gains will not exempt him.

He will be plunged in flaming fire,

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1. p. 40 from «Glimpses of the Scientific Marvels of the Quran» by M. A. El Ghamrawy.

And his wife, the wood carrier.

Will have upon her neck a halter of palm-fibre. (111 : 1-5)

This chapter from the Koran foretold the destiny of Abu Lahab and his wife to be in hell. They lived several years after the revelation of this chapter. None of them was able to convert to Islam even to prove the falsehood of that prophecy. They both died idolators.

2. In the time of the prophet a war broke out between the Byzantines and the Persians, and the Byzantines were defeated.

Thus the Arab Idolators were glad about the defeat of a people who had a scripture, and were mocking at Mohammad and his few disciples who were preaching a new scripture.

But the revelation came to back Mohammad, as a man of scripture, saying :

«The Romans have been defeated.

In the near land, and they, after their defeat will be victorious,

In less than ten years — Allah's is the command in the former case and in the latter — and in that day believers will rejoice.» (30 : 2-4)

And that was fulfilled. There are, also many other prophecies in the Koran.

But, if we leave aside the prophecies of the Koran and think only of the scientific unattainable marvels ; they will compel any person seeking the truth, with a reasonable mind, and with no bigotry, to believe in the Koran and to believe that it comes from Allah.

«The Quran contains no less than eight hundred cosmic verses which, if properly understood, would facilitate the call to Islam, in this scientific era, which the Quran preceded by several centuries, drawing attention to numerous scientific facts, some of which corrected mistakes of Greek philosophers, and some were only discovered very recently.»

«Consequently, we believe that the perfect agreement and conformitty between the literal meanings of the cosmic verses, revealed fourteen centuries ago, and the absolutely certain facts in nature discovered, one after the other, through consecutive scientific research, is the best proof that the Quran is the Book of Allah, and that its inimitability and superexcellence are not restricted to the linguistic and rehetoric aspects alone, but comprise the scientific aspects as well (1)».

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1. p. 18 from «Glimpses of the Scientific Marvels of the Quran by M. A. El-Ghamrawy.

OTHER MIRACLES

Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. We mentioned in the last chapter some miracles of the Unseen world and a few examples of the scientific marvels in the Koran.

But there are many events in the Islamic history which are unimaginable. They can be counted as miracles.

Mohammad, the prophet, a solitary man arises in the midst of a whole nation which sunk deep in all kinds of vice and degradation. He has no power at his back, not even a man to second him and without any preliminaries at all he sets his hand to the unimaginable and apparently impossible task of the reformation, not merely of that one nation, but through it, of the whole humanity, and he starts with that one force, the Force Divine, which makes possible the impossible.

The cause was divine and it was on Divine help that its success depended.

The opposition was growing harder day after day against the prophet. At the same time this one man and, then with his handful of disciples, was more determined and was sure of the triumph of his cause. He was promised success by God :

«Lo ! We verily do help our messengers, and those who believe, in the life of the world and on the day when the witnesses arise» (40 : 51),

«Allah hath promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed (the present rulers) in the earth even as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others); and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He hath approved for them, and will give them in exchange safety after their fear. They serve Me. They ascribe nothing as partner unto Me. Those who disblieve henceforth, they are the miscreants» (24 : 55).

«Say (O Muhammad) unto those who disbelieve; you shall soon be vanquished. (3 : 12)» etc etc.

These are but few of many other verses which had been revealed in the Qoran many years before they came about.

At the time of their foretelling, there was nothing to justify such prophecies.

In fact, all circumstances were against them. No man could possibly have foreseen what so clearly stated as certain to come about, and no human power could have brought to utter failure the whole nation with all its resources ranged against a solitary man whom it was determined to destroy...

Mohammad had believed firmly the promise of God which was fulfilled. Islam has become the religion of all Arabia. Islam spread to the farthest corners of the world known to them.

The Empire of Islam defeated both the Roman and Persian Empires and succeeded them everywhere in less than one hundrd years.

A great human civilization — never known before in the world — was established. Europe of Middle Ages knew science and civilization in the universities of Islamic Spain and Portugal; Andalusia.

But before Islam reached Spain, the greatest change and transformation had started in Arabia itself.

Before Islam, the Arabs were completely disintegrated tribes feeling mutual hatred and engaged in constant warfare against each other.

Some parts of Arabia were Emirates ruled by princes while others were partly autonomous though politically they followed either Persia or Greece. In fact, all the Arab Peninsula was leading a degraded life of ignorance and moral chaos.

«A more disunited people it would be hard to find till suddenly, the miracle took place ! A man arose who, by his personality and by his claim to direct Divine guidance, actually brought about the impossible — namely the union of all these warring factions» (The Ins and Outs of Mesopotania, p. 99). «1»

That circumstance is best described in the Koran itself :

1. p. 245 from «The Religion of Islam by M. M. Ali.

«And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate. And remember Allah's favour unto you : have ye were enemies and He made friendship between your hearts so that ye became as brothers by His grace ; and (how) ye were upon the brink of an abyss of fire and He did save you from it». (3 : 103)

«And (as for the believers) has attuned their hearts. If thou (O Mohammad) hadst spent all that is in the earth thou couldst not have attuned their hearts, but Allah hath attuned them. Lo ! He is Mighty, Wise». (8 : 63)

But the miracle went far beyond any imagination could conceive. It was not the transformation of the individual only, but it was also the transformation of the family, of the society, of the very nation itself. From the war-like elements of the Arab race, the Koran welded a nation, united and full of life and vigour, before whose onward march the greatest kingdoms of the world crumbled as if they had been but toys before the reality of the new faith. Thus, the Koran effected a

transformation of humanity itself, a transformation material as well as moral, an awakening intellectual as well as spiritual.

Now, there are more than two hundred million Moslems in Malaya, China and Indonisia. There was no Islamic invasion in the far East or South and East Africa There was only the migration of moslem merchants who gave the good ideal of morals and good manners. They enchanted the simple ignorant peoples of these lands.

It is said that two Moslem merchants only who migrated to Malaya and Indonisia from Arabia.

Is it not a miraculous result ! ?

FRATERNITY ...

«O mankind ! Lo ! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo ! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo ! Allah is Knower, Aware. (49 : 13)

That is the basic rule of Islam towards humanity :
No colour bar,
No caste system,
But Complete equality.

This rule is confirmed many times in the sayings of the prophet. He used to tell his people «You all come from Adam and Adam is from dust. An Arab has no merit over a non-Arab, unless he is of a greater piety». He, also, shuns many old Arabic traditions such as boasting with ancestry, wealth, dignity and many other aspects — known before Islam — as criteria for the assessment of values and bases of discrimination.

This rule was carried out strictly especially among the pioneer Moslems.

Once, the second Caliph, Omar Ibn Al-Khattab summoned his commissioner in Egypt Amr Ibn Al-Aass and his son, to Madinah — the capital then — when a weak Egyptian Copt had lodged a complaint to the Caliph against Amr's son for having beaten him.

In' front of a big congregation, the Copt beat the son of his country's commissioner. Amr himself was blamed by the Caliph who said to him «Since when have you enslaved the people who are born free by their mothers».

A sublime statement and an eternal one which will always be remembered as an ideal of equality among all human-beings who ought to live without any discrimination between the strong and the weak.

The Moslem is imibed this spirit of equality through his daily prayers.

Being a meeting-place of all Moslems five times daily, besides special occasions, the mosque serves as a training ground where the doctrine of the equality and fraternity of mankind is put into practice. It is undoubtedly true that every religion is based on the two fundamental principles of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, but it is equally true that no religion has successfully established a living brotherhood of man as Islam has. The secret of this unparalleled success lies in the mosque. The mosque enables Moslems to meet five times a day on terms of perfect equality and in spirit of brotherhood. There, they all stand in rows before their Great Creator knowing no difference of colour or rank, all following the lead of one man.

All differences and distinctions, for the time being, are obliterated. The doctrine of the brotherhood of man is brought into practice five times a day in the mosque, which in this way becomes the training ground of equality and fraternity.

Those people who meet daily at the mosque will naturaly ask about their absent brother and seek whether he is ill or in need of any help.

This spirit of fraternity is strengthened by the spirit of love and mercy preached fervently in Islam as they are some of the attributes of God.

«The qualities of love and mercy in God are emphasized in the Holy Quran more than in any other sacred book. Not only does every chapter opens with the two names Rahman and Rahim, thus showing that the qualities of love and mercy are predominant in Divine nature, but the Holy Book goes further and lays the greatest stress in explicit words on the immeasurable vastness of the Divine Mercy.

«The following may be taken as examples :

«He has ordained mercy on Himself» (6 : 2, 54)

«Your Lord is the Lord of all — encompassing mercy» (6 : 148)

«And My mercy encompasses all things» (7 : 156)

«O My servants ! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah for Allah forgives the sins altogether» (39 : 53)

«Our Lord ! Thou embracest all things in mercy and knowledge». (40 : 7)

«So great is the Divine mercy that it encompasses believers and unbelievers alike as the above verses show. Nay, the very foes of Holy Prophet are spoken of as having mercy shown to them : «And when we make people taste of mercy after an affliction touches them, Lo ! they devise plans against Our communications» (10 : 21).

«The polytheists are repeatedly spoken of as calling upon God in distress and God as removing their distress. The picture of the Divine attributes portrayed in the Holy Quran, is first and last a picture of love and mercy (1)».

Islam, also, asks his followers to believe in love and mercy as far as forgiving their enemies. God says :

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1. pp. 165, 166 from «The Religion of Islam» by M. M. Ali.

«Repel evil with that which is better. We are best aware of that which they allege». (23 : 96), and

«The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then lo ! he, between whom and thee was enmity (will become) as though he was a bosom friend» (41 : 34).

This fraternity had reached a summit never repeated in human history when the prophet and his Meccan friends migrated to Madinah.

Those emigrants left all their money, property and even some of their wives — who were captured or who refused migration — in Mecca. They were in a state of dreadful poverty.

The prophet established an atmosphere of brotherhood among the emigrants (called then the Muhagereen) and the Moslems of Madinah (known as Al Ansar — Helpers —).

Every helper divided all what he owned with his emigrant brother by self motive and without any compulsion.

It was a wonderful image of brotherhood and uni-

maginable peaceful redistribution of wealth in the new Islamic state founded in Madinah. It was a practical true interpretation of God's words :

«The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah that haply ye may obtain mercy». (49 : 10).

LEGISLATION

Islamic Legislation is another miracle of the Glorious Koran. Because, Islam deals, not only with ways of devotion, forms of worship and relations between man and his God, but also with problems of the world around us, questions of relations between man and man, his social and political life, inheritance, the distribution of wealth and the relations of labour and capital. It, also, lays the basis of administration of justice, military organisation, peace and war, national finance, debts and contracts, laws for the help of the poor, the orphan and the widow and many other questions the proper understanding of which enables man to lead a happy life.

This equilibrium between beliefs and deeds preached by Islam is the basis of peace and security in the life of a Moslem.

A Moslem must adhere to his doctrines and obey the ordinances and regulations of Islam to reach this stage of peace.

This means that Islam is composed of two parts; doctrines (or beliefs) and ordinances which contain the practical part of the religion.

The Koran always describes the believer as the man of good deeds. This description often comes in the Koran as «Those who believe and do good».

Thus the believer is the one who has accepted the principles which bring about peace of mind or security from fear.

There is an organic relation between the principles of belief and those of action. Beliefs must form the roots (or the source) of actions or regulations of a Moslem. In other words, when a Moslem develops his beliefs, they will have their reflection upon his deeds.

Islam is based on five principles:

1. The two witnesses «I confess that there is only one God and Mohammad is the prophet of God»
2. The prayer
3. The fasting
4. The Alms or tithes
5 The pilgrimage to Mecca (annual international meeting for Moslems).

I shall speak in this chapter about prayer as an example of the principles of beliefs and how it affects the development of Moslem's character.

Prayer is really the first step in the inward progress of man. It is his highest spiritual ascent.. It keeps him away from evil and thus enables him to attain his perfection. It helps him to realize the Divine in

him and that realization not only urges him to do disinterested service for humanity but also makes him attain the highest degree of moral and spiritual perfection.

Prayer takes place five times each day and night in congregation at the mosque. Thus, it is, also, a means of levelling all differences of rank, colour and nationality, and the means of bringing about cohesion and unity among men which is the necessary basis of a living civilisation.

«Reference to the beginning of the Holy Quran will show what prayer really aims at. There, we are told that a Muslim, who tread the road to self-development, must accept certain principles and carry out certain duties : «This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard against evil, those who believe what has been revealed before thee! and of the Hereafter they are sure. These are on a right course from their Lord, and these it is that shall attain to full self-development (muflihun)» (2 : 2-5).

«Muflihun is the plural of Muflih which is derived from the root falh meaning cleaving asunder a thing. Falah, the infinitive form of muflih, means success and complete attainment of what is desired. The same authority says, that falah is of two kinds, one re-

lating to this life and the other relating to the next. The former stands for the attainment of those good things whereby the life of this world is made good ; and these are baqa (existence), ghina (freedom from want, i.e., wealth) and izz (honour). The falah relating to the next life included according to Raghib, four things, that is to say, life with which there is no death, wealth with which there is no want, honour with which there is no disgrace and knowledge with which there is no ignorance. Thus falah, whether relating to this life or to the next, carries with it the idea of complete development of the inner faculties of man, the attaining to both material and moral greatness; what, in other words, may be called the full self-development of man.

«This self-development is reached, according to the Holy Quran by the acceptance of three principles, the existence of God, His revealing Himself to man, and the Hereafter ; and by the exercise of two duties, the keeping up of prayer, or seeking communion with God, and spending of one's wealth for others or the service of humanity. The place of prayer in self-development of man is given such a prominence in Islam that in the call to prayer the words «come to prayer» are immediately followed by the words «come to falah»,

«thus showing that self development is attained through prayer (1).»

Prayer is man's means to realise within himself the Divine and reach the complete conviction of the existence of God which is the fundamental principle of every religion.

Thus, a Moslem stands five times a day in secret communication with his God during his Prayers.

This conviction of the existence of God and this obedience to Him by prayer leads to compliance with his orders through doing what is good.

It is stated in the Koran that prayer is useless unless it leads to the service of humanity :

«So woe to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers, who do good to be seen, and withhold alms» (107 : 4-7).

When man reaches this stage of belief in the existence of God by the help of prayer, he gains a great moral force. It is a great force that even the most powerful material force give way before it.

Such man will lead a true Islamic life according to the rules laid down by God Himself for the benefit of humanity ;

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1. pp. 356, 357 from «Religion of Islam» by M. M. Ali.

«Should He not know what He created ? And He is the Subtile, the Aware». (67 : 14)

Thus, the Koran put the broad rules in a general way and the prophet had to look into the details of these rules and define them. He was — in his deeds and sayings — inspired by God ;

> «Your comrade (Mohammad) erreth not, nor is deceived : Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired,
>
> Which one of mighty powers hath taught him». (53 : 2-5)

The role of the prophet then was the role of an interpreter, an inspired one under the guidance of God.

The prophet sayings and deeds — the Sunnah — explains the generalities of the Koran in detail whenever the circumstances call to such explanation.

For example; Azzakah — tithes — is mentioned in many parts of the Koran in general terms ; but the Sunnah shows the amount of wealth that constitutes the alms. It, also, defines the percentage of money or products or investment or livestock.

The prophet is always the explainer of his message in a way that corresponds with the intentions of Its Sender.

Thus, we are ordered in the Koran to obey him; «Say : Obey Allah and the messenger» (3 : 32)

Before the death of the prophet, the legislation was complete and perfect. The learned men of Islam have not introduced anything after his death. They, always, go back to what was perfected during his lifetime. Then, they put the rules according to the place and circumstances and to the public interest by measuring with what was revealed in the Koran and the Sunnah.

Then, Islam, spread east, west, north and south invading many countries of different civilization, traditions and law. The Arabs mixed with those peoples and were influenced by their ways of thinking and behaviour.

There was a continuous development of dealings and transactions. It was a necessity to have new legislation based on Islamic rules to cope with the new circumstances. This has always been done perfectly by the learned men of Islam who have taken into consideration the four origins of Islamic legislation ; that is : the Koran, the Sunnah (the sayings and deeds of the prophet), opinion or common good and the unanimity of learned men of Islam. The last two

sources must not contradict any of the rules based in the Koran or the Sunnah.

Thus, «Islamic legislation has its own characteristics as follows :

1. It goes back in its general basis to God's inspiration, the Koran and the Sunnah.
2. Its rulings are governed by the incentive of religion and ethics.
3. Its reward is both in this world and in the other world.
4. It has a communal tendency.
5. It can be developed to meet with the needs of time and place circumstances .
6. It aims at organising and facilitating life, public and private and happiness of makind (1)».

Thus, Islamic legislation has, always been acceptable everywhere in the world.

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1. p. 212 from «Islam and Humanity's Need of It» by M. Y. Moussa.

One example is the inheritance law which the Christians of Egypt were hapy to adopt in their courts of personal cases.

Islamic ligislation is truly God's inspiration. We find in its basic sources, the Koran and the Sonnah, everything we know in different laws ; civil, commercial, penal, constitutional or international.

PENAL LAW

God says :

«Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it» (99 : 7,8)

Undoubtedly, it is a dreadful menace to humanity. Because man alone, of the whole living creation, has the power to discriminate between good and evil. And so acute is his perception of good and evil that he will strive with all his might to promote good and to eradicate evil.

Yet, the person who can escape, in this life, from the hand of law, will escape punishment of the world.

Thus, Islam promotes the belief in resurrection to awaken consciousness in man. It is one of the principal beliefs in Islam.

The law of God rewards ad punishes in this world and in the hereafter. The punishment of God is more severe and His reward is much greater.

But, the penal law, in Islamic jurisprudence, is confined to punishments for crimes mentioned by the Koran and the Sunnah, while other punishments are left to the discretion of the ruler.

We must, also, mention that all violations of Di-

vine limits are not punishable in this life. Punishment is inflicted only in those causes in which there is violation of other people's rights. So, neglect of prayer or omission to perform pilgrimage are not punishable. But to stop paying alms, the poor due, is tantamount to rebellion.

The punishable crimes in Islamic law are those which affect society. They are murder, highway robbery, theft, adultery, accusation of adultery and drinking wine.

Before discussing some punishments in detail ; it is necessary to mention that the Koran lays down a general law for the punishment of offences in the following words ;

«And the recompense of evil is punishment proportionate thereto, but whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward from Allah» (42 : 40).

It is a rule of wide application especially in case of personal offences. Besides the basis, applied to every civilised code, is the punishment of evil should be proportionate.

We must, also, mention that suspicion is not enough to prove the sin of adultery, libel, theft or drinking wine.

The prophet says «try to keep your fellow moslem away from sin. If you can help him out of it, do so, and do not punish him, because it is better to err in forgiveness than to err in punishment».

Then the mercy of God enveloped everybody and everything. His call for forgiveness for those who repent is unmistakable.

He says :

«Say : O my slaves who have been prodigal to their own hurt ! Despair not of the mercy of Allah, who forgiveth all sins. Lo ! He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. (39 : 53).

But, after all these precautions and conditions of security, there must be a severe punishment for the aggressor because :

«And here is life for you in the law of retaliation, O men of understanding» (2 : 179).

The expression «Life for you» used in the Koran to indicate that retaliation guards the community against criminals, provides safety from fear and reduce crimes in order that society may live a normal and peaceful life.

Thus, God says about theft crime ;

«And as for the man who steals and the woman

who steals, cut off their hands as a punishment for what they have done, an examplary punishment from Allah, and Allah is Mighty, Wise.

«But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms himself, Allah will turn to him mercifully; for Allah is Forgiving, Merciful» (5 : 38, 39).

It is proved practically that imprisonment for theft has scarcely any deterrent effect upon the thief.

Prisons, all over the world, east and west, are full of thieves. Hundreds of millions of pounds are spent to keep these prisons and pay salaries for an ever increasing number of policemen.

On the other hand, in a country where God's penal law is in practice, there are approximately no thieves and no need for such enormous expenses. There is peace. Every one at hearing the call for prayer leaves his shop open and goes to the mosque fearing nothing.

One hand may be cut off during the whole year. But the greater benefit is to protect the nation against such a crime and living in peace and free from fear.

Why is it called savagery then if in Europe the thief is sentenced to death in many communist countries ?

Moreover, cutting off the hand cannot be carried out

except after guaranteeing the minimum necessaties of life for every citizen, that is dwelling, food and clothes for winter and summer.

Thus, Omar Ibn el Khattab, the second calif, stopped this punishment during the famine that happened during his reign.

We may add that Islamic laws observe that punishment should not result in irreperable damage, that it should be swift, and that it does not incite the offender to a more harmful behaviour. A profound comparison between the harm resulting from long imprisonment, and from corporal punishment would show that in the first instance, the offender is separated from his family over a long or short term according to the offence, secondly that he lives in the company of other criminals and is affected by their influence so that he is sent to prison with one character defect and a crime which he might have committed incidentally, but when the term of confinement is over, he leaves the prison with many moral defects and possibly may have become, in the meantime, a social misfit. Thirdly, he suffers from loss of dignity, becomes a mere number not even called by his own name, fourthly, he becomes a paralysed human power, fifthly, he suffers corporal punishment in

case of misdemeanours against prison regulations, as happens to prison inmates when breaking prison-laws-

To all these harmful results is added the deprivation from liberty, which is the original punishment. Corporal punishment (as flogging) on the other hand, even though undiginified, does not last more than one hour after which he can recover his self-respect if he chooses to reform his conduct and can resume normal life among his people. In this way he becomes safe from the company of evil doers.

Thus, corporal punishment is less harmful and more effective, whereas imprisonment brings about more lasting and harmful results against the community.

The Koran does not mention the sort of punishment for drunkenness but the prophet inflicted punishment in such cases. The punishment was flogging. It was limited to eighty stripes in the reign of the second calif ; Omar.

The same number of flogging is the punishment for the false accusation of adultery.

It is a dangerous accusation which threatens matri-

monial relations and the reputation of the accused. Thus, who dare to accuse anyone of adultery must have four witnesses or he will be punished himself.

«And those who accuse free women, then don't bring four witnesses, flog them, giving eighty stripes, and do not admit any evidence from them ever, and these it is that are the transgressors.

Except those who repent after this and act aright, for Allah is Forgiving, Merciful» (24 : 4, 5).

«The Arabic word for flogging is Jald which means skin, and Jalada signifies, he hit or hurt the skin. Jald (flogging) was therefore a punishment which should be felt by the skin, and it aimed more at disgracing the culprit than torturing him. In the time of the Holy Prophet, and even some time after him, there was no whip, and flogging was carried out by beating with a stick or with the hand or with shoes. The culprit was not stripped naked for the infliction of the punishment of flogging ; only he was required to take off thick clothes such as would ward off the stroke altogether. Baring the back for flogging is forbidden among the Muslims. A shirt or two must be left over the body» .(1)

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1. pp. 753, 754 from «The religion of Islam» by M. M. Ali.

In conclusion, we like to mention that punishment, according to Islamic penal law, must be inflicted without respect of persons, nor should mediation be accepted in such cases. When, in the case of a certain woman who was guilty of theft, some people sought to intercede on her behalf through Osamah, a kin friend of the prophet, since she was descended of a good family, the prophet was enraged . He said «Do you intercede in a matter of God's punishment ? »Then, he addressed the people in general. He said, «Those before you went astray, for, when one of them committed a crime and he was a great man, they would not punish him, and when he was a poor man they would execute the punishment. By God; if Fatimah the daughter of Mohammad steals, Mohammad shall cut off her hand».

The Islamic penal law is set up to protect the society against crime and oppression.

Islam has, also, set preventive laws against vice and crime. The most important of them is awakening the consciousness by practising precepts of Islam. A moslem believes that no sinner will escape God's punishment in this life or it will be more severe in the hereafter.

Talking about Islamic penal law Mr. David De Santillana said :

«The object of law is the prevention of evil, hence two main principles : equality and good faith.

«1. Equality : 'The white man is not above the black nor the black above the yellow; all men are equal before their Maker', said the Prophet. Equal before God, members of a great family in which there is neither noble nore villein, but only believers, Muslims are equal before civil law, and this equality was proclaimed at a time when it was practically unknown throughout Christian society.

«2. This law, equal for all, rests essentially on good faith. Muslims must keep their pledges. No one may profit from what belongs to another Muslim, except with the owners consent. 'Be honest towards those who have confidence in your honesty'; 'Do not betray those who have betrayed you' — these traditions and a great many others referred to the prophet are also among the general rules of Muslim law. This conception of good faith is essentially an ethical one, and is elevated to an abstract and universal notion. It strikes us as being more akin to our mind than the feudal and

Germanic conception of good faith springing from personal fealty. The system thus allows a wide scope to the human will, and attaches importance to the spirit rather than to the letter.

«Having as its scope social utility, Muslim law is essentially progressive, in much the same way as our own.» (1)

1. pp. 304, 305 from Oxford book «The Legacy of Islam».

SOCIAL LAWS

Islam is a complete code of life. It was once able to achieve a great transformation of a nation — The Arabs — which had been leading a degraded life of ignorance and moral chaos. From that chaos sprang a great civilization that affected all the known world and brought the greatest reform conceived by humanity.

It was a transformation of the individual, of the family, of the society, of the nation itself.

Islam is capable of achieving this transformation once more today. It can always renew itself today and for ever.

The basis of this transformation is well described by David de Santillana.

«The traditional fame of tribe and family was pulled down. There was no longer any question of gentes, of clientship, of tribal confedrations. He who adopted Islam had to forget all connections even his own kith and kin, unless they were his companions in the faith. Like Abraham, he must say to his own people, so long as they adhere to the old faith : (Between you and me there is nothing in common). Such was the aspect of the new social order inaugurated by Muhammad.

«The body of these believers make up the Islamic community. Hence the ethically religions character of the whole system, in which mutual help is considered as a legal duty, according to the precept that every Muslim should be the helper of every other Muslim in case of need. (The Muslims, says a hadith (A saying of the prophet), are a single hand, like a compact wall whose bricks support each other). These ideas are to be found in every part of the law, both public and private. A corollary of brotherhood is equality. Equal before God, the Muslims are equal among themselves. (All men are descended from Adam and Adam was built up from clay). Equality before the law is a fundamental basis of the whole system, political as well as civil». (1)

Besides, Islam knows no mediator between the individual and his maker. There is no chruch, no priest, no sacraments. But the Moslem belives that God is nearer to him than his jugular vein. He is under the eye of God from whom nothing escapes, to whom is present every action, every word, even the most hidden thought.

1. p.p. 285, 286 From Oxford Book «The Legacy of Islam».

The Moslem also, can call upon God at any time and any place. Thus his deeds must be within the limits laid down by God which mean «No harm and no harming».(2)

According to this rule Omar, the second calif, allowed a man to dig in the land of someone else so that he could get water to irrigate his own land.

That man had complained of his neighbour Ibn Maslamah who refused digging a canal in his garden. Omar asked Ibn Maslamah ; «Does this passage of water harm you ?» «No» he replied. Omar asked ; «Why do you cause harm to your neighbour ? You will benefit of this passage before him ... ! By God, if the only passage is over your belly, I shall let water pass».

This is an example among many others which proves the communal tendency of Islamic legislation.

This communal tendency appears in all principles and beliefs of Islam, such as prayers, fasting, alms, the good neighbour relations, the fulfilment of contracts, forbidding usury, etc. etc. ...

It is based on a powerful unity of thought which is the main strength of Islam. Thus, the Islamic law is a part of its theology. The distinction between the rights of Allah and the rights of man has no more

2. A saying of the prophet.

meaning than the distinction between public law and private law.

Again we can quote here the words of Mr. D. De Santillana :

«The religion's ideas have had no doubt a very great influence. That influence consists in the moral bent it has given to law, that is to say in the connexion, amounting often to a blending, between legal rules and moral precepts. Partnership, loan, the character of witnesses, the relations between master and servant, plaintiff and defendant, every convention and bargain forming the subject-matter of legal relationships takes a moral turn and is considered under an aspect superior to mere private interest. Deposit, for instance, is a form of assistance and of mutual help, because thereby one helps the proprietor to preserve his property; and this is recommended because God says : 'Help each other in good works', and the prophet says : 'God helps man so long as man helps his brother'. The man who receives knowingly a payment which is not due to him incurs a twofold sort of obligation : he is guilty before God, and guilty towards the victim of his fraud. The debtor who has the means to pay his debt and postpones payment is guilty of a serious sin, and endangers his salvation. The prophet uttered some charming words

with regard to neighbourly relations : 'Be Kind to your neighbour. Draw the veil over him. Look upon him with an eye of kindness. If you see him doing evil forgive him. If you see him doing good to you, proclaim thankfulness'.

«The consequence of this spirit is that the exercise of a right is actually regarded as the fulfilment of duty : For if right is good, It is not possible to omit it without sin'. He who claims his property from an unrightful possessor fulfils also a moral obligation : for if he kept silence, he would allow the unjust possessor to continue in his sin. 'Help thy brother even if he is unjust', says the prophet 'Assistance in this case consists in preventing his being unjust ! 'no one may make use of his right so as to cause another an evident damage'.

«Everywhere the limit of law and its measures is traced to morality» (1).

Thus, it is said that Islamic law is applicable without the State. The non-existence of the state is not an execuse for the non-application of the Islamic law, for Allah has revealed the religion of Islam to Moslems

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1. pp. 307, 308 from Oxford book «The Legacy of Islam».

to apply its principles under all circumstances, at all times and climes. Islamic law must be carried out, even in default of a Moslem ruler.

Because the Moslem is reminded over thirty times daily through his prayer and reading the opening chapter of the Koran — of the idea of requital. This idea of the requital of deeds, undoubtedly impresses on the mind the reality of a future life when every deed shall find its full reward. The greater the faith in the good or bad consequences of a deed, the greater is the incentive which urges man to uphold or to withold him from that deed. Now a belief in life after death implies that every deed, however secretly it may be done, must bear fruit, and therefore this belief is both the greatest restraint upon evil or irresponsible deeds. A deep consciousness of the consequences of a deed, consequences which must follow even after death, is thus engendered by a belief in a life after death. Such a belief purifies the motives with which a deed is done. It makes a man work with the most selfless of motives, for he works for higher and nobler ends relating to the life beyond the grave. In brief, this belief is the most important basis of a consolidated Islamic society.

«Accordingly, law, divine in its origin, human in its subject-matter, has no other end but the welfare of man, even if this end be not at first sight apparent :

for God can do nothing which does not express the wisdom and mercy of which, He is the supreme source».

Thus, Islam aims to set firm foundations for its society of mercy, love and cooperation.

God says :

«The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethern and observe your duty to Allah that haply you may obtain mercy». (49 : 10)

The prophet, also, says :

«The true believers, in love and compassion, look like a living body, if any organ is sick, the rest of the body will suffer as well the pains of fever and insomnia».

«Do not let hatred, envy, or conspiracy reign among you, but be true brethren and kinsmen».

«No one is a true believer until he wishes for others the good wished for himself». and :

«Having mercy for the people on the earth so that God may have mercy on you».

This element of mercy which must be engendered in the faithful souls, is not confined to human beings. It goes far more deeply to cover every living creature. The prophet said ; «A woman was condemned to hell

because she shut a cat in a room till death. She neither fed it nor left it free to seek its own food».

Now, we have to mention some of the basic rules of the Islamic code which concern social life :

1. First of all is that Islamic government should be based on two principles : consultation and responsibility. A ruler is not to be despotic and nobody is allowed to shun responsibility even if he were the Caliph himself.

The prophet used to consult the wise and intelligent in all public affairs in case there were no evidence in the Koran.

He used to gather all the possible audience in the Mosque to consult them especially about critical decisions.

Consultation is urged by the Koran in many chapters. There is a special chapter in the Koran called «Consultation» or «Counsel». In this chapter, believers are described by God's words :

«And those who answer the call of their Lord and establish worship, and whose affairs are matter of counsel». (42 : 38).

God, also, says to his prophet :

«So pardon them (The believers) and ask forgi-

veness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs» (3 : 15).

This government lays a great responsibility on the people. They must guide their government in case of deviation from the right path and rectify or at least attempt to rectify any wrong committed by the rulers.

The prophet says «Every moslem must obey his ruler, whether to his liking or not, so long as his orders concur with heavenly decrees. If the orders tend to contradict the laws of God; he is not to be obeyed».

The first caliph, Abu Bacr, gave a speech on his appointment saying «O Believers, I have been chosen as caliph though I am not the best among you. If I prove good, help me. If I do anything wrong you have to correct it for me. Obey me as long as I obey God and his canons, If not, you are free to disobey me».

Once the government is based on these sound foundations, justice will prevail, which is the ultimate aim of Islam.

2. God has endowed the universe with all its riches; water, air, metals, food etc. etc...; in order that man enjoys them in the righteous way.

But, it draws our attention to two things ; first

that this life is not eternal, second, it is merely a path to eternity where lies the true life.

Once we forget these principles, we shall live a materialistic life which will lead us to eternal fighting for the sake of siezing as much as we can of economic resources. And here lays the source of misery of human-beings.

3. Religious Freedom : «Islam holds freedom of religion in high esteem. It even fought for it. In its view sedition is more serious crime than murder. It based this freedom of religion on free choice without any compulsion whatsoever.»

«The Koran teems with verses which call for free thinking as regards heaven, earth and what is between them. Islam, also, prohibited compulsion especially in the matters of religion as is testified by the following verse : «No compulsion in religion. Right is now manifestly distinct from wrong». One of the Ansar — helpers of Madinah — once wanted to compel two of his sons to embrace Islam, but the prophet forbade him to do so. (1)»

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1. pp. 488, 489 from the book of «The Third Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research», Abou Zahra's Paper.

4. **Family Regulations :** The family is the basic cell of the society. It has its great role in human life. Thus, Islam gives great care to the legislation concerning the family so as not to leave any item open to doubt or deviation or commentary ; so as to make its regulations permanent, and divinely ordained. It has rescued women from their old miserable and humiliated position.

Here, we may mention somthing about what was going on in Arabia as an example of women's position in human society before Islam.

A woman in Arabia — as under the Roman Law — was a mere chattel amongst pagan Arabs. She formed a part of the household and the estate of her husband or father and was inherited by sons. That was forbidden by Islam.

In pre-Islamic times, females at birth were burried alive. This terrible custom was common amongst the tribes of Quraish and Qudah.

But Islam regards man and woman as equal whether that be in intellectual or moral deeds.

Islam gives man and woman the same responsibi-

lities and consider the woman capable to undergo life difficulties to a certain extent. She and the man together have to start life on the ground that each is a free individual who possesses his own free will.

In fact, Islam has been a thorough revolution in the status of women. The theory of equality between the sexes has been recognised and has been practically carried into effect. The Koran on this subject states : «And women have rights similar to those of men over them in kindness (2 : 298).

She is equal to man in duties and rewards. In England, for example, it differs from the Islamic law of inheritance which permits the woman to inherit whether she is a daughter sister, mother or wife.

A moslem woman is free to accept or refuse the man who proposes to her. After marriage, she has her own money, property or trade.

Yet, marriage in Islam in sacred contract which the Koran points out its importance and makes clear the rights of the husband and wife, their duties, the dowry, the alimony etc...

Every moslem must enter into this contract, unless there are special reasons to do otherwise.

The prophet is reported to have said to certain people who talked of fasting in the daytime and keep-awake during the night praying to God and keeping away from marriage «I keep fast and break it, and I pray and I sleep, and I am married, so whoever inclines to other way than mine, he is not of me».

The Koran states «He it is Who created you from a single being and of the same did He make his mate that he might incline to her» (7 : 189) and :

«Allah had made wives for you from yourselves, and has given you sons and daughters from your Wives» (16 : 72).

And many other verses which explain that marriage is the union of two souls which are one in their essence on basis of love, the pride of humanity. Allah says «And one of his signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find quiet of mind in them, and He put between you love and compassion» (30 : 2)

The very fact that marriage is looked upon as a contract in Islam, shows that before marriage both parties

must be satisfied so that each will see a desirable partner for life in the other. The Koran says «Marry such women as seem good to you» (4 : 3). The prophet says ; «when one of you makes a proposal of marriage to a woman; then he should look at her before marriage. It is likely to bring about greater love and concord between them».

Thus, the consent of both, man and woman, is an essential part of the marriage contract.

The husband must pay the dowry which is considered, in Islam, as a free gift to the bride. It may be a very small sum of money and it may be paid after marriage.

Under Islamic law, the husband is legally bound to maintain his wife and her domestic servants, whether they belong to the Moslem faith or not. The obligation of the husband comes into effect as soon as the marriage contract comes into operation.

The wife has the right to claim a habitation of her own and to be provided for all her needs by her husband.

The obligation of the woman to live with her hus-

band is not absolute. The law recognises circumstances which justify her refusal to live with him. For instance, if he ill-treats her, if he has deserted her for a long time, or if he has ordered her from his house or even connived at her doing so, he cannot force her to reenter his house or ask assistance of a court of justice to compel her to live with him. Bad conduct or gross neglect under Islamic law is forbidden.

In her house, she is the lady or the ruler. The prophet says : «Everyone of you is a ruler and everyone shall be questioned about his subjects ; the king is a ruler and the man is a ruler over the people of his house, and the woman is a ruler over the house of her husband and his children so everyone is a ruler and everyone shall be questioned about his subjects.»

If the prophet says : «The man is a ruler over the people of his house», and if God says «Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend of their property», it is just a sort of division of work. Each one of them is entrusted with the functions which are best suited for his or her own nature.

Every unit or house or any field of work must have a chief to keep order and can come to a decision for the benefit of the unit.

5. Polygamy ; «About this point Gustave Lebon (1) said that it is not only Islam that allows polygamy but the Jews, Persians, Arabs also permitted it as well as other eastern countries before the advent of Islam. To the nations that embraced Islam, Polygamy was far from a novelty ... It is not possible to find a religion strong enough to change natural instincts and eradicate this craving for the enjoyment of earthly love which is an inherent quality of eastern temperament and atmosphere.

«In the west where this 'joi de vivre' does not dominate in the private and social life of man as much as it does in the East, we still do not find monogamy prevails except perhaps on paper, that is in the set-down laws and rarely in human nature. Lebon goes on to add that there is no reason why polygamy in the East be looked down upon though legal, when it does in secret exit in the West. On the contrary, it should be given due respect because of the frank legal recognition of a social need.

«Moreover some years ago the archbishop of England came to the conclusion that the deteriorated mo-

1. A French famous writer

rals of our present era cannot be remedied except by allowing polygamy. He was broadminded enough to admit that there is not a single verse in the Bible forbidding polygamy, nor did the Apostles' epistles include such a ban (2)».

Yet, Marriage cannot take place without agreement between both parties, the wife as well as the husband. Thus, there cannot be any polygamy without the second wife's consent at least.

Before Islam, there was no limit to the number of wives man could have. Let's see what the Koran says about this subject : «Marry of the women who seem good to you ; two or three or four, and if you cannot do justice (to so many) then one only, or the captives that your right hands possess. Thus, it is more likely that ye will not do injustice». (4 : 3)

Justice among wives is nearly impossible. So, it is advisable that a Moslem should marry one unless there are such circumstances as barenness or incurable disease.

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2. P. 421 from the book of «The Third Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research», Abou Zahra's paper.

In such cases, polygamy is a better solution than divorce. The innocent first wife might accept cordially the second wife to please her husband.

When the number of men is much inferior to the number of women in a nation as was the case after the last world war, a man with two Wives is most justified than a man with several sweet-hearts.

Germany was obliged after the war to recognise illegitimate children and give them the right to inherit. But a legitimate child from a legal marriage has his pride and prestige preserved.

The problem is a major one in the western world. It cannot be solved by giving women a chance to earn their living. Islam does not oppose the work of women. But the crux of the dilemma is not the provision of bread but the provision of a home-life and that problem can only be solved through polygamy.

6. **Divorce** ; I think we need not to discuss divorce after the fort of Catholics, Italy, has allowed it as well as all the world fourteen centuries after Islam. Yet, we must mention some reasons which make divorce sometimes inevitable.

The Koran states that a marriage can last only when understanding, kindness and affection prevail. Human nature, however, being unpredicatable can lead to heart changes. If and when aversion and hate reach an impossible degree, it is then for the interest of both sides to part rather than to go on living in an atmosphere of tension and discontent.

Yet, divorce is considered in Islam to be the most odious lawful act. God advises us to try a reconciliation between the husband and wife before divorce.

If this attempt proves a failure, then there is a temporary separation — divorce — for the period of three months during which they can join again.

The post-divorce conditions of husband and wife are perfectly treated in the Koran. All rules to be followed are wisely set, concerning the alimony of the divorced wife, her children and how they should be brought up and so on.

After this image from social legislations, I can say that Islam respects inidividual and relgious liberty , it provides for the freedom of thought and opposes slavery. It does not impose its teachings by force. It treats all people equally with love, charity and human feelings.

Islam is the religion fit to rule humans, cure their ills, stop the wicked and soothe the ailing hearts.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Nowadays, international relations are established according to treaties and agreements among the stronger states oftenly with the aim of determining the destiny of the weaker nations against their will. Oftentimes, too, these agreements are signed with the purpose of extending supremacy of ruling countries over greater areas during peacetime.

«In Islam, on the contrary international relations are based on equity, and any agreement among states that infringes upon justice, is not tolerated. In Islam intolerance is frankly rejected, as stated in Sura : The bee (XVI, 90) 'Lo ! Allah enjoineth justice and kindness, and giving to kinsfolk and forbiddeth lewdness and abomination and oppression. He exhorteth you in order ye may take heed'.

«Any agreement or alliance that is based on unjust terms and exploitation of the weak by despoiling them of their land, is considered non-existent in Islam because it rests on sin. The prophet definitely said in this connection, 'Any peace (alliance) is acceptable ex-

cept when it allows what is prohibited or forbids what is lawful (1)».

Islam is the last religion and has been revealed for all humanity. It propagates from the beginning the grand idea of unifying the whole human race and gathering it together under one banner. It was able — for sometimes — to sweep away all geographical limitations, all bars of colour and race and lay down the basis of human unity from the Atlantic to Pacific oceans.

We can still hear the echo of these ideas at pilgrimage when moslems from all over the world come to Mecca. There, pilgrims see the traces left by Abraham the father of prophets. They grasp more fully the unit of all Messages and the unity of human kind across ·ges.

During pilgrimage, all stand on the same footing, wearing the same clothes made of the same material. During these days, all social and racial differences disappear and the pilgrims feel that they are one nation indeed.

1. p.p. 347, 375 from the book of «The Third Confeference of the Academyof Islamic Research», Abou Zahra's paper.

Islamic legislation preserves the right of man regardless his colour or religion. It is a fervent call for friendship and love on the basis of human fraternity. God says : «O mankind ! Lo ! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo ! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo ! Allah is Knower, aware. (49 : 13).

God likes different nations to know one another for :

a) Getting together in friendship leads to peace,
b) It helps man to make better use of the wealth of the earth through cooperation and exchange.
c) It leads to human reciprocal respect.

Thus, friendship is the basis of human relations whether between individuals or communities The law of justice must overrule all relations whether between moslems or non-moslems or even warring enemies.

God says «O ye who believe ! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to

Allah. Lo ! Allah is informed of what ye do (5 : 8)' and

«Allah does not forbid you to be kind and equitable to those who have neither made war on your religion nor driven you from your homes. Allah loveth the equitable» (60 : 8)

Justice must govern international relations as any other human relation. Virtue has one criterion. It cannot justify the tyranny of the power over the weak.

Thus, pacts, pledges and treaties are sacred in Islam. God says :

«O ye who believe : Fulfil your undertaking (5 : 1),

«Fulfil the covenant of Allah when ye have covenanted and break not your oath after the asseveration of them, and after ye have made Allah surety over you, Lo ! Allah knoweth what ye do». (16 : 91) and

«Lo ! of the covenant it will be asked.» (17 : 34)

Of the first pacts made in Islam was that one made by the prophet on reaching Madinah, with the Jews, providing for cooperation, good will, protection of virtue, fighting evil, safeguarding Al Madinah from aggression. Its aim was peaceful co-existence in Madinah.

The prophet, also, made a number of alliances with the Arab tribes to drive them towards more cooperation and peaceful life.

«Since individual and internatonal relations should be based on mutual amity and co-operation, it naturally follows that, in these relations, peace should be the rule, war being only an exception. For this reason Islam calls on all Muslims to adhere to peace, as is testified by the verse. «Believers, enter in peace whole heartedly and follow not the footsteps of the Satan, he is your sworn enemy» (2 : 208) In case they are forced into war, Moslims should suspend hostilities whenever the aggressor shows inclination towards peace, for thus says Allah :

«If enemy incline towards peace, do thou incline towards it and trust in Allah(1)» (VIII : 61)

After several years in Madinah the moslems were eager to pay a visitation to the sacred mosque — the Caabah — in Mecca during the sacred months — when fighting is forbidden — . Such visitation is a right for everybody from any nationality. But, when Mohammad and his disciples had reached the suburbs of Mecca, Qoraish were standing with their arms to prevent them from entering Mecca.

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1. P. 460 from the book of «The Third Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research», Abou Zahra's paper.

A long negotiation took place ending with the Hudaibiya truce which allowed the Moslems to perform their visitation the next year. They also, agreed to make peace with their enemies. That truce of peace was called victory in the Koran. And, it was a real victory for Islam. Since it put a stop to hostilities, the non-Moslems freely mixed with Moslems and they conceived the good points of Islam and the high morality of the prophet. The number of moslems increased by leaps and bounds and carpings ceased.

Islam is turly a religion of peace. It is a clear proved historical fact. It has reached the far corners of the world, east and south Africa, Malaya, China, etc... without waging a sword but by the good example of a true moslem.

The spread of Islam by force is a thing of which no trace can be found in the holy Koran. Nay, the holy book lays down the opposite doctrine in clear words : «There is no compulsion in religion» and the reason is added : «The right way is clearly distinct from error». (2 : 256) This verse was revealed after the permission for defensive war had been given, and it is therefore certain that the permission to fight had no connection with the preaching of religion.

The permission as stated in the Koran is, «Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but begin not hostilities. Allah loveth not aggressors». It is a fact that the holy Koran never taught such an aggressive doctrine, nor did the prophet ever think of it.

But if moslems are forced into war, they will soon suspend hostilities whenever the aggressor shows inclination towards peace.

And, Islam has laid down the most human rules for war. The prophet used to order his army before going into battle : «Do not be treacherous, do not massacre, do not kill the old, the woman or children. Do not mutilate the bodies of the dead. Do not cut down palm trees or any other fruit-bearing trees. Do not kill a sheep, a cow or a camel but for your food. You will pass by certain people who are devoted to their monastries (i.e. monks), leave them in peace».

Thus, when the Moslem army approached the Jordan valley, its christian natives sent to the leader of the army saying «O Moslems, you are nearer to our hearts than the Romans though they are Christians. You are more faithful, more indulgent, more kind, just in judgement and you are better, certainly, as governors».

They, also, insisted that the just Caliph Omar ought to receive the keys of Jerusalem by himself.

During war, the citizens of the aggressive country who are living in the Moslem country are never harmed. This because, Moslems wage no war against people, but fight aggressive rulers. Peoples are no war-mongers, but unjust rulers are. That is why people should not be held responsible for the crimes of their rulers. God says «No soul shall bear another's burden» and «Everyone is held responsible for his deeds».

If this foreigner leaves ths Moslem country and joins his army to fight Moslems, his properties will remain safe according to Islamic principles. And if he dies in war his property will be sent to his heirs.

Islam orders us for the sake of peaceful coexistence among the peoples of the world to treat non-Moslems well and to be human in our behaviour to them as to the holders of Islam.

The Caliph Omar Ibn Alkattab made pensions from the treasure of the Moslem state for the old and weak jews and christians living in his country.

In the Koran we are asked to say to them; «We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you. Our God and your God is one, and it is to Him we bow in Islam».

In brief, Islam aims at peaceful co-existence in the world by respecting treaties and pledges, keeping good neighbourhood with all nations and avoiding intervention with the freedom of others.

Within Human Abilities

The qualities of love and mercy are predominant in Divine nature. The Koran lays the greatest stress in explicit words on the immeasurable vastness of the divine mercy :

«He has ordained mercy in Himself». (6 : 12)

«And My mercy encompasses all things» (7 : 156)

Thus, it is one of the most important aspects of Islam that it asks for obedience within the scope of human abilities and endurance.

God says :

«Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its scope». (2 : 286)

«Allah would make the burden light for you, for man was created weak». (4 : 28)

«Those who follow the messenger, the prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul; he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear». (7 : 157)

The prophet, also, says :

«I was sent to preach a merciful and gracious religion», and :

«God ordered you to perform certain acts ; do not waste them. He set out limits ; do not cross them. He forbade you from cetain things ; do not commit them. He kept silence as regards cetain things out of mercy and graciousness ; do not look for them.»

This means that moderation is a basic principle in Islamic legislation.

«Ibn al-Qayim — one of the famous scholars of Islam — says : Legislation is based upon the good of creatures in living and dealing. It is all justice. It is full of grace and wisdom. Anything that transgresses the line of justice and mercy and the welfare of the community is beyond the boundaries of legislation, even if some try to integrate it by interpretation. Legislation is God's justice and mercy towards His creatures. It is His shadow on earth».(1)

Islam does not forbid people to enjoy their desires and emotions but requires that these be subjected to rational thinking and self-control. The prophet specified his opinion in this respect by saying ; «You cannot be

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1. P.P. 52, 53 from «The moderation of Islam» by M. M. Almadani.

believers unless your desires are in accordance with my teachings».

«Al-shatby, the Muslim scholar, wrote in the same vein as Bentham (.. interests are legal, but mischief is prohibited in as much as it is incompatible with the ultimate aim of this life, that is to promote the common good, not to satisfy personal desires and passions.(1)»

Thus, Islam forbids drinking wine and eating pork. But if one is about to die of thirst and there is nothing but wine ; he can drink it just to save his lfe. The same can be done if one is starving and there is nothing to save him except pork.

As God says : «But he who is driven by necessity, neither craving nor transgressing ; it is no sin for him. Lo ! Allah is forgiving, Merciful». (2 : 173)

Islam, also, has not imposed monasticism on his disciples. It is against human nature. Islam wants a man to live his normal life ; the twofold life of soul and body ... moral and physical and to share his fellow—creatures in toiling for a better life.

Thomas Arnold said; «The African and Syrian doc-

1. P. 408 from the book of «The Third Conference of the «Academy of Islamic Research», Abou Zahra's paper.

otrs had substituted obstruse metaphysical dogmas for the religion of Christ .. The people were practically polytheists, worshipping a crowd of martyrs, saints and angels ; the upper classes were effeminate and corrupt, the middle classes oppressed by taxation, the slaves without hope for the present or the future. Islam swept away this mass of corruption and superstitions.

«Islam was a revolt against empty theological polemics ; it was a masculine protest against, the exaltation of celibacy as a crown of piety. It brought out the fundamental dogmas of religon — the unity and greatness of God.»

«It showed that God is merciful and righteous and that He claimeth obedience to His will, resignation and faith. It proclaimed the responsibilty of man, a future life and a day of judgement.»

«It enforced the duties of prayers, almsgiving, fasting and benevolence. It thrust aside the artificial virtues, the religious frauds and follies, the perverted moral sentiments and the verbal subtleties of theological disputants. It replaced monkishness by manliness. It gave hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind and recognition to the fundamental facts of human nature» (1)

1. p.p. 67, 68 from «The Preaching of Islam» by Thomas Arnold.

THE ECONOMIC THEORY

IN

ISLAM

God says :

«And when we said unto the angels : Fall prostrate before Adam, they fell prostrate (all) save the devil; he refused.

«Therefore we said O Adam ! This is an enemy unto thee and unto thy wife, so let him not drive you both out of the Garden so that thou come to toil.

«It is (vouchsafed) unto thee that thou hungerest not therein nor art naked.

«And that thou thirstest not therein nor art exposed to the sun's heat». (20 : 116-119)

To avoid hunger, nakedness, the sun's heat and thirst ; one must have food, clothes and house. These are the minimum necessities with which an Islamic government must provide its citizens in order to be able to carry out Islamic laws.

This means, in practice, a good degree of social justice. But, how can it be achieved ? By a balanced approach to life.

H.A.R. Gibb says «Within the western world Islam still maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites. Opposed equally to the anarchy of European nationalism and the regimentation of Russian communism, it has not yet succumbed the obsession with the economic side of life which is characteristic of present-day Europe and present-day Russia alike. Its social ethics has been admirably summed up by professor Masignon :

«Islam has the merit of standing for a very equalitarian conception of the contribution of each citizen by the tithe to the resources of the community, it is hostile to unrestricted exchange, to banking capital, to state loans, to indirect taxes on objects of prime necessity, but it holds to the rights of the father and the husband, to private property, and to commercial capital. Here again it occupies intermediate position between the doctrines of bourgeois capitalism and bolshovist communism (1)».

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1. P.P. 378-379 from «Whither Islam».

Mr. D. DE Santillana says : «Islamic law favours every practical activity and holds in great esteem agriculture, commerce, and every kind of work ; it censures all those who burden others with their maintenance, requires every man to keep himself by the produce of his own labour, and does not despise any sort of work whereby man make himself independent of others. 'L'Islam est une religion d'hommes' says Renan. Considering its spirit, therefore, we see that the tendency of Islamic law is to allow human action the widest limits, and we may agree with the Muslim jurists, when they teach that the fundamental rule of law is liberty.

«But liberty cannot be unlimited. God has therefore set a bound to make it as beneficial as possible either to the individual or to society (1)».

S. Inamullah Khan — Secretary General of world Muslim Congress — says : «Capitalism in its nefarious form leads to monopolies and cartel and wealth becomes concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or at best in a few families. Marxism on the other hand is a mechanistic philosophy where man is but a part of the machine called the state. Islam neither believes

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1. p. 289 from Oxford book «The Legacy of Islam».

in the former nor in the latter attitude of life. In Islam the consideration of Man is the highest consideration. In Islam economic values are based on moral and spiritual values. In Islam man is neither an automaton nor an impersonal being subject to same dialectic materialism, nay he is the very apex of creation to which everything in the universe is subservient. Islam does not teach man to be so selfcentred and so self-possessed as to become the very symbol of die-hard individualism, nor does Islam want man to be lost in the fathomless sea of collectivism. Islam strikes a balance between the Individual and Society and makes one complimentary to the other. Islam does not divide man on the basis of class and therefore, does not base history on class-struggle. In Islam the only yardstick which differentiates man from man is one's piety and righteousness.

«Islam brings a harmonious blend between one's duties to one's self, one's duties to Allah and one's duties to fellowmen. The above combination chisels off any sharp edges which may come in the way of a healthy and poised growth of human society. Nay, it helps in the building up of a healthy classless society of equals and brothers

«The Islamic socio-economic order is a system which is bound to give birth to a welfare society where nobody would be too rich to become tyrannical and nobody would be too poor to go begging. Islam, through its balanced approach to life, does not allow lopsided growth of human society but builds up, without regimentation, organised social welfare communities all over the world by doing away with economic maladjustments. This does not mean that Islam believes in equal distribution of wealth. Islam only wants to end oppression and exploitation by demanding equitable distribution of wealth as far as possible.

«Islam by its war on poverty and destitution on the one side and on its insistence with regard to the circulation of wealth on the other provides a positive answer to the challenge both of Capitalism and Communism. Islam is neither of the two, it is a class by itself (1)».

Shaikh M. Abou Zahra says :

«Social justice is meant to enable every capable person to work according to his ability, to afford him the

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1. P.P. 5, 6 from an introduction to «Islam Versus Capitalism And Marxism» By Dr. M. Dawalibi.

suitable opportunities for the development of his latent faculties, and to place the right man in the right place. It also means to provide properly for the disabled, and render economic aid to the socially maladjusted young and old, so that they may live a decent life.

«Social justice, however, does not imply absolute equality of all men. It only implies equality of opportunity for all, so that each may receive such education as develops his latent faculties and do the work for which he is equipped. To place the right man in the right place is the sound social organisation in which all talented persons are engaged in appropriate work.

«Social justice does not involve the abolition of poverty but aims to increase production, engage all idle capacities, and alleviate mental and material sufferings, so that the poor may not bear malice to the rich or lack the primary necessities of life such as food, clothing and dwelling.

«It is impossible to abolish poverty or achieve equality between all men. Poverty and wealth will never disappear as long as people differ widley in their capacities and talents (1)».

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way 453 from the book of«The Third Conference of duly r[illegible]cademy of Islamic Research».

But how can Islam achieve this good degree of social justice practically ! ?

Economic theory in Islam had been put into practice for several centuries. It was a great success.

Its basis is narrowing the gap between incomes by destribution and redistribution of wealth.

It reaches this aim by means of three factors :

1 Inheritance law :
Islam ensures to the worker the reward of his work, great or small, in accordance with the merit of work.

Private property is the natural result of industrious work.

Thus, Islam respects private property as a means of protecting one of the most important motives of work and of life.

It is an instinct in man to look forward to immortality on earth. It is felt in his heart when he sees h' children and grandchildren who carry his name. H deavours to save for them.

These savings are an important factor of development and are the subject of inheritance.

At the same time, inheritance is the means of distributing and redistributing of wealth in Islam due to the fact that the wife, the sons and the daughters have shares in the father's wealth. If the father has no children, then his wealth is inherited by his wife, his father his brothers and sisters.

Inheritance is a means of dividing wealth to avoid its accumulation in few hands, a thing which leads to caste feuds.

And at the same time, it is an important motive for work which is sacred in Islam. The Koran is a continuous summon for work and finding out the secrets of nature and its hidden treasures. And the wage of the worker is also sacred.

The prophet says ; «Give the worker his wage before his sweat is dry».

Because Islam considers every function to be in the · of God. And what is in the way of Good must be ·ewarded. Even if you are going to build a fac-

tory; your first intention must be to render a service for society and to give an opportunity of work for several individuals — brothers in humanity — and families, then comes the goal of profit.

2. Prohibiting Usury :

One of the mottoes of Islam is : «Money cannot breed money without the toil of work».

Usury is a profit without toil and Islam says, «No gain without labour».

God says« Allah hath blighted usury and made almsgiving fruitful. Allah loveth not the impious and guilty.» (2 : 276)

The usurer is compared — in the Koran — with this whom the devil has prostrated by his touch, so that he is unable to arise. He grows in selfishness until he is derived of all sympathetic feelings.

By usury — or money interest — seventy percent of the wealth of the world has been accumulated in the hands of a few individuals. They urge governments to wage wars for their own benefits. They cause industries to stop in some nations to increase unem-

ployment and plant chaos ... They are behind many vices. They throw the seeds of hatred among the peoples everywhere.

Then, usury moreover promotes habits of idleness, since the usurer instead of doing any hard work, becomes like a parasite living on others'.

God says :

«Those who swallow usury cannot rise up save as he ariseth whom the devil hath prostrated by his touch. That is because they say : Trade is just like usury : whereas Allah permitteth trading and forbiddeth usury». (2 : 275)

Trade is not usury. It is a great service for the society. It needs a lot of labour. It is considered an important pillar of economics in Islam. It is counted to be nine tenthes of the means of living. Thus many strict rules have been laid by Islam to sustain honest dealings in business transactions.

The prophet says «If the two parties speak the truth and make manifest every detail, their transaction shall be blessed but if they conceal and tell lie, the blessing of their transaction shall be obliterated».

Withholding food-stuffs so that they may become dearer is prohibited and so the booming of prices in general.

Regulations have also been set up for international trade with the aim of maintaining human fraternity. Monopoly of any kind is forbidden to ease means of living for all peoples.

How, then can we compare trade with usury as is said by some usurers till now ?

There is no sin more grave than usury in Islam. God has not threatened with war in the whole Koran except in case of usury.

«O ye who believe ! Observe your duty to Allah, and give up what remaineth (due to you) from usury, if ye are (in truth) believers.

«And if ye do not, then be warned of war (against you) from Allah and His messenger».(2 : 279)

Fourteen centuries later. Lord John Maynard Keynes the contemporary reformer of capitalism says ;

«Thus, it is to our best advantage to reduce the

rate of interest to that point relatively to the schedule of the marginal efficiency of capital at which there is full employment. »

«There can be no doubt that this criterion will lead to a much lower rate of interest than has ruled hetherto; and so far as one can guess at the schedules of the marginal efficiency of capital corresponding to increasing amounts of capital, the rate of iterest is likely to fall steadily, if it shoud be practicable to maintain conditions of more or less continuous full employment ...

«So ..., the growth of real capital is held back by the money-rate of interest, and that if this brake were removed the growth of real capital would be, in the modern world, so rapid that a zerc money-rate of interest would probably be justified., not indeed forthwith, but within a comparatively short period of time (1)».

Here, Keynes sees that money-interest hinder development. It does not encourage businessmen to join more enterprises because interest will devour their efforts. Thus, unemployment increases as the case is now (1982) in Europe and America and some of our

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1. PP. 357, 375 from «The General theory of Employment, Interest and Money» by J.M. Keynes.

brothers suffer from poverty everywhere especially in underdeveloped countries.

From ethical point of view, usury is greed and avarice and exploitation. These are contrary to good ethics and the rules of human behaviour. The usurer exploits the needy for his need of money. The borrower will never be pleased.

Usury sows the seeds of hatred and rancour in the society and severs the fraternal and cooperative relation among the people.

Islam gives more consideration to the good loan-without interest — than to almsgiving. It is related that when the prophet ascended to heaven, he saw written on the paradise gate «For almsgiving ten times the like thereof, and for the loan eighteen times». He asked Gabriel ; «How is it that loan is better than alms ? Gabriel answered ; «Because he who asks for alms asks what he has (as his right) but the borrower does not borrow save for a real need».

3. **The Alms** : (Zakat)

Islam put the first law in history for social welfare. It allocates an independent budget for the poor by means of collecting Azzakah; the alms.

The alms are due from ten golden sterlings or their equivalent in money saved for a year and are more than one's needs.

Thus, it is collected from a great number of the people in the community. It is $2^1/_2$% of the capital if it were in money or merchandise of trade. It is 20% of minerals, 5-10% of agricultural products ... etc. etc..

The government is bound to collect the alms and spend them throug channels appointed by God :

«The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah and (for) the wayfarer; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is knower wise». (9 : 60).

Because it is the duty of the government to provide properly for the disabled such as men of old age, weak women, orphans and invalids. The prophet says, «Anyone who leaves wealth, his wealths shall go to his heirs; if he leaves nothing to his heirs, I shall support them».

The debtors are given from the alms, because Islam

wants debts of unable debtors to be guaranteed by the government. These debts must not be the result of fraud or bad behaviour. The same thing must be done in the case of death, if the bequeath is insufficient.

Debts guarantee provides stability and assurance for credit in Islamic economy. Markets will avoid chaos and disturbance.

But, alms in Islam are not mere charity. They are a completion of the prohibiting usury's law. In other words, alms are the integral factor of Islamic economy.

Because, if money is kept in a bank to remain stagnant without interest it will diminish every year by alms.

Besides, Islam does not approve hoarding idle Money. God says :

«They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muhammed) of paniful doom.

«On the day when it will (all) be heated in the fire of hell, and their foreheads and their flanks and their backs will be branded therewith (and it will be said unto them) : Here is that which ye hoarded for

yourselves. Now taste of what ye used to hoard». (9 : 34, 35)

Islam considers any sort of wealth a national asset. It must be at the service of the community ; in the field of work whether cultivating land or reforming the desert or building factories or any other sort of investment to increase the national income and give new chances of labour for human brothers.

Man has not created water, oil, coal, gold, air, seas or any other source of wealth. He is an agent in his wealth which is God's property in reality. Thus God says :

«Believe in Allah and his messenger, and spend of that whereof He hath made you trustees» (57 : 7)

At last, alms increases the number of consumers. It creates a new power of consumption which will help to increase economic activities for the good of the whole society.

The economic theory in Islam is a part of a complete set of codes for the whole life that are able to solve human problems.

Shaikh M. Abou Zahrah says : «The great powers are now armed to teeth. So horrible are the catastrophes that befall weak nations at the hands of the strong that people denounce them vehemently. Further more, wealthy countries try to dominate poor ones, and while some countries throw the surplus of their cereals and crops into the (1) sea Others suffer from famines (2). Economic aids are now intended to be a means of Political baragaining. The principle that policy has no conscience, has become a commonplace nowadays. Is there any remedy for this state of affairs ? Is there any means of reviving the power of virtue among mankind ? The best answer, in my view, is Islam which unifies mankind in all countries and bases human relations on cooperation, friendhsip, mercy, tolerance and justice. It prohibits exploitation and monopoly. It enjoins us to unite, not to divide, to be kind to the needy, not to desert them, to be merciful not to be cruel.»

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1. A sinful act according to Islam.
2. What conseience has a president or a king seeing his people throwing the wheat into the sea or burning their crops while millions of human-beings in the third world are dying of hunger ? Is he, then, doing for peace or for fire and chaos.

«We must adhere to true religion which establishes justice and equity and bases all human relations on high morals (1)».

Islam strives to limit and lessen material differences among the people. It endeavours to lift up the standard of the poor on one hand while it closes the causes of capital inflation on the other on basis of its moral and civil laws.

Thus the prophet says :

«He is not one of us who sleeps the night knowing that his neighbour is hungry» and «People are to share three things ; fire, water and herbs».

All moslem thinkers, throughout history, accepted the generalisation of this statement to include all natural resources to be under collective ownership. If this idea is carried out; we shall live in a happy world because there is plenty of everything ... of every kind of wealth in the world.

Scarcety of resources is but a superstition propagated by man's minor thought.

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1. P. 496 from the book of " The Third Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research ".

Conclusion

Islam is the creed of religious unity, political unity and social unity. It is the religion of the mind and intellect, of the instinct and clarity, of liberty and equality as well as of humanity. For all this, it can be said that Islam is a religion and a state, and it is this religion which proclaimed the rights of Man.

All that pertains to Islam, be it in matters of creed, ethics or human organization, is in complete accord with the intellect. The belief in one God, unqiue in His attributes, in power in creativeness is the essence of Islam. Islam is also a theory that philosophers have investigated in past ages. It is an idea easy to comprehend, simple, clear, unconstrained by the delusions of materialistic philosophy that makes its followers ignorantly declare the non-existence of God.

Asked, why he believes in Mohammad, an Arab answered ; «I never heard him ask for anything illogical, or forbid anything logical».

Islam is the universal code of life needed by humanity. Its purpose is to serve all of mankind without colour or racial discrimination. It does not set up

certain legislations for the white people and others for the black, or for eastern and western nations.

Islam orders individuals and people to know one another having one measure of discrimnation :

«O mankind ! Lo ! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. The noblest of you in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo ! Allah is Knower, Aware». (49 : 13)

«The miracle of Islam lies in the fact that it is simple to understand, that it embodies a form of knowledge which is of permanent value to human beings, that it does not depend for its proof upon past miracles which might be open to doubt in later years».

Besides, a belief in the hereafter, in reward and retaliation, raises man above the animal world, makes his life constructive and safeguard him from emotional breakdown. It gives him hope in the future, develops his sense of responsibility and gives him stamina to withstand material loss.

This belief is a human heritage and a weapon to

ward off catastrophies. Its lack is a handicap in facing the struggle of life problems.

Professor M. Abou Zahrah says :

«The greatness of Islam lies in its moderation, and in its conformity with the instinctive needs of human beings, as well as, of its taking care of body and soul.»

«Three points may be mentioned in this respect : First : Islam forbids monasticism as a form of worship; thus a man cannot retire from society, unless he is physically disabled. True worship includes active service of humanity and its education in self-discipline. This cannot be done if one lives in isolaton. Work is no less important — as a means of worship — than prayer in a temple.

Second : Worship should not be coupled by exertion that might hinder its continuation. Exertion is permissible only under specific circumstances : in occasional forms of worship or service, as when waging a war in defence of the oppressed.

Third : self — mortification is against nature and must be strictly forbidden, celibacy included(1)».

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1. p. 446 from the book of «The Third Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research».

Besides, Islam has introduced a set of laws, penal, civil, international and personal proved — after examination — to be the most ideal set of laws known to humanity ...

After this long talk and short glimpses of this complete and perfect code of life, Islam, can we imagine that it is the composition of that illiterate prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him ?

Certainly, it is the message of God to humanity ... to his creatures whom He knows well.

May Allah show us the straight path, the path of those whom he has favoured, not the path of those who earn his anger or of those who go astray.

«Amen»

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عبد السميع المصري

الإسلام

رسالة الله للبشر

الناشر
مكتبة وهبة
١٤ شارع الجمهورية - عابدين
القاهرة - ت - ٣٩١٧٤٧٠